Committee to Minimize Toxic Waste

MEMO

To: LBNL Environmental Sampling Task Force Members
From: Task Force Member CMTW
Date: March 29, 2001

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and University of California say no to US EPA and its Berkeley community partners and reject real time monitoring of tritium at Lawrence Hall of Science.

For more than four years the debate over tritium emissions from LBNL's National Tritium Labeling Facility's (NTLF) stack, next door to the Lawrence Hall of Science, a children's school and museum, has left the Berkeley community with few answers.

In an attempt to respond to community concerns, a delegation from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Air and Radiation from Washington D C. met with the Committee to Minimize Toxic Waste (CMTW) in early February soliciting their support for a grant proposal for real-time monitoring of tritium emissions at LHS.

U. S. EPA's original Community Access to Radiation in the Environment (CARE, 3/7/01) proposal included the installation and analysis of a new real time technology for measuring tritium levels at very low concentrations and a special opportunity for community involvement. The use of this ultra sensitive real-time technology allows for both tritium gas (HT) and tritiated water vapor (HTO) to be detected at levels of 100 Bq/m anticipated near the NTLF stack.

The health effects of ionizing radiation are cancer, genetic mutations in the body or reproductive cells, and birth defects and immune suppression.

U. S. EPA's representative Brian Littleton was shocked when both LBNL and UCB rejected the proposal, declaring that US EPA and its community partners will be denied access to LBNL property for the placement of the monitor in the Eucalyptus grove between the Tritium stack and LHS. Instead, LBNL is proposing to place eight (8) new silica gel monitors, limited to only detecting HTO and not considered accurate because of possible pre-sampling water load and a month between sample collections.. Moreover, the Lab intends to locate these monitors at distances up to several thousand meters away from the tritium stack.

Why does LBNL insist on monitoring so far from the source of the emissions, instead of supporting this unique opportunity offered by the U. S. EPA funding to finally provide the concerned community **real time tritium data** at the LHS and a **real** opportunity to move forward with the tritium question?